

Press release

REMEDI₄ALL, an ambitious EU-funded research initiative, launches to drive forward the repurposing of medicines in Europe

Paris, 1st September 2022 - REMEDI₄ALL launched today with the aim of making a major leap forward in drug repurposing. This promising approach to drug development consisting in the identification, testing, and validation of new therapeutic indications for existing medications, is a developing field but faces numerous barriers and systemic inefficiencies. Still, its potential to significantly bring down times and costs of drug development -it focuses on already approved, discontinued, shelved or investigational therapeutics- makes this novel strategy attractive for rare and neglected conditions, cancer, emerging public health threats such as COVID-19 or new drug combinations. It also translates into more sustainable health systems.

To advance knowledge in this field and address substantial obstacles -fragmented and siloed research; non-standardised datasets; heterogenous quality of computational tools; poor patient engagement or lack of incentives and policies to support and enhance drug repurposing- the European Union (EU) through the Horizon Europe (HE) programme will invest 23 million euros in REMEDI₄ALL over the next 5 years. It is expected that, due to REMEDI₄ALL, more (and better) repurposed therapeutics will be widely available thanks to more agile, cutting-edge development processes, ultimately contributing to increased sustainability of health systems.

A favourable eco-system for drug repurposing

The project kicks off with the ambition of establishing a European research and innovation eco-system that facilitates fast and cost-effective patient-centric development and access to repurposed medicines. To this end, REMEDI₄ALL will:

- build a state-of-the-art platform to provide expertise and services across the complete value chain (scientific, methodological, financial, legal, regulatory, intellectual property) for patient-centric medicine repurposing at every development stage and in any disease area.
- assemble advanced in silico tools for Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), open datasets and tools and expertise required to understand the mechanism of action of specific medicines.
- create a global community of practice connected in a think-tank-like environment through impactful multidisciplinary activities and events.
- train and educate the next generation of researchers, clinicians, patients, policymakers, regulators and funders in cutting-edge drug repurposing tools and processes.
- favour dialogue and debate to advance policy and fair access to repurposed medicines across the EU.

REMEDI₄ALL has selected four medicine repurposing projects in different stages of development to demonstrate the viability of the newly created platform. Each project covers a different therapeutic area with high unmet medical needs– pancreatic cancer, COVID-19, rare diseases and ultra-rare diseases. These projects will first be onboarded to ensure a patient-centric approach before testing all elements of the platform to optimise its tools and services.

A multidisciplinary effort to cover every aspect of drug repurposing

The REMEDI₄ALL consortium brings together a unique combination of expertise to address the complexities of drug repurposing. Under the leadership of EATRIS, the European infrastructure for translational medicine, 24 organisations in the fields of clinical and translational research, clinical operations, patient engagement and education, regulatory framework, funding, governance, Health Technology Assessment (HTA) or pricing and reimbursement will closely collaborate to make drug repurposing mainstream. "It's an enormous privilege to work

with this team of leading international experts, institutions and patient representatives in such an important and high potential area for European health. REMEDI4ALL will truly transform drug repurposing by making the process more transparent, efficient and – most importantly – completely patient-centred” expressed Anton Ussi, CEO at EATRIS ERIC.

EURORDIS’ contribution to the project

EURORDIS believes that by providing support to academics, clinicians and patients to progress through the R&D pathway, repurposing approaches are going to bring suitable and accessible therapeutic solutions to patients. As a project partner, EURORDIS will bring its expertise in patient engagement, therapeutic development, regulatory and policy affairs. We will lead the development of a ‘Patient-user co-creation pathway’ - helping researchers access patient expertise to support all stages of repurposing and building the overall framework for engaging patients and stakeholder communities in the REMEDI4ALL platform.

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About rare diseases

The European Union considers a disease as rare when it affects less than 1 in 2,000 citizens. Over 6,000 different rare diseases have been identified to date, affecting an estimated 30 million people in Europe and 300 million worldwide. Due to the low prevalence of each disease, medical expertise is rare, knowledge is scarce, care offerings are inadequate, and research is limited. Despite their great overall number, rare disease patients are the orphans of health systems, often denied diagnosis, treatment and the benefits of research.

EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe

EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe is a unique, non-profit alliance of 1000 rare disease patient organisations from 74 countries that work together to improve the lives of the 30 million people living with a rare disease in Europe.

By connecting patients, families and patient groups, as well as by bringing together all stakeholders and mobilising the rare disease community, EURORDIS strengthens the patient voice and shapes research, policies and patient services. Follow [@eurordis](https://www.instagram.com/eurordis) or see the [EURORDIS Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/eurordis). For more information, visit [eurordis.org](https://www.eurordis.org).

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